1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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●115 We got a great deal of help from two Nyakyusa clerks, Leonard Mwaisumo (now dead) and John Brown Mwaikambo. Mwaisumo laboured to teach us the language (for there is no published grammar or dictionary in Nyakyusa) as well as the conventions of the country, and he wrote many valuable texts. Mwaikambo (who joined us after Mwaisumo had been appointed clerk to the Appeal Court of the district) was also invaluable in writing texts, which gave both his own account of events and those of people he interviewed. Mwaisumo was a commoner; Mwaikambo the son of a chief. Both men were Christians; both had passed Standard VII, and spoke reasonably good English. To mention others by name is perhaps invidious, but we cannot omit these: the great rain-maker, Kasitile, an old man and a conservative, who formally introduced Godfrey Wilson to his ancestors, and opened his heart on matters of ritual; Mwakionde, famous as a doctor and maker of lions, a regular Silenus in his joviality and consumption of beer; Mwandesi, an ancient chief recognised by the Nyakyusa themselves as their foremost authority on history, and Mwaipopo, the chief in whose country we lived in Selya (see Plate V); Mwambuputa, Kakuju, Nsona, and Mwafula, village headmen and conservatives; Fibombe, a Christian elder (see Plate VI); Porokoto, the pagan (but sceptical) chief of Ilolo, and his sister Martha, a leading woman in Rungwe congregation. Our house-boy Angombwike, and his wife Ndimbomi (see Plate IX) were also admirable informants. Both were Christian, but Angombwike came from a family of pagan doctors, his mother Mwangoka being one of the foremost practitioners in Selya, and herself an excellent informant. These are but a few among many able informants, for we were instructed in *ibi-Nyakyusa*, that is, Nyakyusa language and culture, by people of varying status from all over the district.

xii To the Europeans of Rungwe district and Ngonde we also owe a great debt for warm hospitality, professional help, and a friendly tolerance of the eccentricities of anthropologists. We spent delightful week-ends in Tukuyu, Karonga, and Mwakelili, the guests of one and another of our European friends, who are too many to mention all by name. We must however acknowledge our particular obligation to Mr. P. M. Huggins, District Officer of Rungwe when we arrived, and Mrs. Huggins; Mr. Fox-Strangeways, sometime District Commissioner at Karonga, and Mrs.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the loft[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all relations with her kin.

(b) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Porokoto, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakune, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakune and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated by him soon afterwards.)

MWASALEMBA: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious

[1] The loft (*ifijulo*) consists of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private store-place which may not be touched without her permission.